

Vermont Breast Cancer Facts

- ▶ **Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer deaths (after lung cancer) among Vermont women.**
- ▶ **An average of 97 Vermont women die from breast cancer each year. From 1997 to 2001, there is no significant change in female breast cancer mortality in Vermont.**
- ▶ **Vermont's breast cancer death rate is 27.7 per 100,000 women. This is not statistically different from the U.S. rate of 26.5.**
- ▶ **Nationally breast cancer accounts for 16 percent of all cancer deaths among women, and a woman's risk for developing breast cancer in her lifetime is one in seven. A woman's risk of dying from breast cancer in her lifetime is one in thirty-three.**
- ▶ **Each year approximately 465 Vermont women are diagnosed with breast cancer.**
- ▶ **Vermont's breast cancer incidence rate is 138.6 per 100,000 women. This is not significantly different compared to the U.S. SEER rate of 143.2.**
- ▶ **Nationally, white women have a higher incidence rate of breast cancer. African-American women are more likely to die from breast cancer because their cancers are often diagnosed at a later stage.**
- ▶ **Breast cancer is most often found in women over the age of 50. In Vermont, 76 percent of breast cancer cases are diagnosed in Vermont women over the age of 50.**
- ▶ **Vermont women age 75-79 have the highest age-specific incidence of breast cancer, at a rate of 477.2 per 100,000 women.**
- ▶ **Nationally, 98 percent of women whose breast cancer is diagnosed at a localized stage (confined to the breast tissue) survive their cancers for at least five years, compared to only 27 percent of those diagnosed at a distant stage (spread to other parts of the body).**
- ▶ **Vermont and the U.S. both have close to two-thirds of invasive breast cancers diagnosed at a localized stage.**
- ▶ **While many factors have been associated with breast cancer, most only relate to a moderate increase in risk. This suggests that multiple factors may play a role in each woman's disease and that unrecognized factors may also exist.**

- ▶ **Certain factors have been associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. These include having a personal or family history of breast cancer, not having children or having a first child after age 30, menstruating at an early age, or experiencing menopause at a late age.**
- ▶ **Some women show symptoms of breast cancer, while others show no signs of disease. Symptoms include breast lumps, dimpling of breast tissue, and nipple discharge.**
- ▶ **Early detection of breast cancer (through regular breast self-exams, clinical breast exams, and mammograms) increases the chances of long-term survival.**
- ▶ **The Ladies First Program recommends the following 3-step program for good breast health:**
 - ◆ **Starting at age 20, a woman should practice monthly breast self-examinations.**
 - ◆ **A woman should have a clinical breast examination done by a health professional at least once a year for women age 40 and older and every 3 years for women under age 40.**
 - ◆ **Women 40 years of age and older should have a screening mammogram (a simple low-dose x-ray) annually.**